

TheCURRENT

STONY CREEK'S HOME AND SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2012

From the Principal's Desk

As the school calendar turns to March, we can look forward to many important events! On Friday, March 2nd, Stony Creek is scheduled for March Madness Jr. Edition, a family kick-off event for the March Madness Parent and Staff Event on March 17th. Come join us for a wonderful evening of March Madness Family Style. On the morning of March 7th, we welcome to Stony Creek the parents of our kindergarten class for the 2012-2013 school year. At this meeting, the parents will begin the registration process and learn about the many events planned to welcome our new kindergarten class and their families.

On March 13th, our third, fourth, and fifth graders will begin taking the 2012 PSSA Test. The schedule for this year's testing cycle was sent out to parents last month in the form of a letter and is repeated in this month's edition of *TheCURRENT*.

On March 17th, St. Patrick's Day, the Stony Creek PTO will host its Third Annual March Madness Event, a fun-filled evening for our parents, staff, and friends. March Madness has become a highly anticipated event at Stony Creek, where the adults of our community have an evening of fun while at the same time helping to raise funds to support the fine work of our Parent Teacher Organization. One of the highlights of this event is the auctioning of the students' work; this year it is the TreeScapes. Under the guidance of art teacher Mrs. Kowalchuk and parent Tracy Suchodolski, each class has created a framed set of individual tree paintings, one from each student in the class. Each will be auctioned off to the highest bidder at March Madness. How would you like one? I hope that you will consider joining us for March Madness 2012! It promises to be another great event!

And, finally, consider joining us at Wissahickon High School on March 27th for this year's District Strings Concert. The evening promises to be an exciting one for our students playing a stringed instrument, as they join with their district peers to perform for their families and friends.

Much is happening this month, and I am confident that I speak for all of us when I say, "Welcome, spring." By the way, was there a winter????

Gary W. Abbamont

STONY CREEK'S UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2 | March Madness Jr. Edition, Gym Night, 7 PM |
| 7 | Kindergarten Program Overview, 9:30 AM |
| 9 | End of Trimester 2, Early Dismissal (K-5) |
| 13-22 | PSSA Testing Window, Grades 3, 4, and 5 |
| 17 | PTO March Madness Evening Event |
| 22 | Report Cards Sent Home for K-5 Students |
| 27 | District Strings' Concert at WHS |
| 28 | Spring Conferences, Early Dismissal K-8 |
| 28-30 | PTO Spring Book Fair |
| 29 | Spring Conferences, Early Dismissal K-12 |
| 30 | Spring Pictures (LifeTouch) |
| 30 | Spring Conferences, Early Dismissal K-12 |

**Join Us for March
Madness, on Saturday,
March 17, 2012!**

Kindergarten Registration for 2012-2013

Pre-Registration Overview

The elementary schools in the Wissahickon School District will be holding a pre-registration overview session for the parents of next year's kindergartners. The Open House for Stony Creek Elementary School will be held on Wednesday, March 7, 2012. It will begin at 9:30 AM, with a welcome and overview of the school program by Mr. Abbamont. Building tours will follow. Children are welcome, but they are not required to attend. The future kindergarten students will be invited to an orientation day.

Kindergarten Registration will be held on Monday, April 23rd and Wednesday, April 25th at Stony Creek. Parents should pick up the registration packet on March 7th when they come to the Kindergarten Overview Session and complete the packet at home. On March 7th, parents will be scheduled for a registration appointment on either April 23rd or 25th.

Monday, April 23, 2012: 9:45 AM - 5:15PM
 Wednesday, April 25, 2012: 7:45 AM - 3:15 PM

Please encourage families with kindergarten age children to register their children as this helps us to plan appropriately for the upcoming school year.

Time for Kids – A Successful Drive



I want to once again thank the Stony Creek families for supporting our *Time for Kids* initiative. Through your efforts we have once again earned enough subscriptions so that every Stony Creek student will receive a year's subscription free. This excellent non-fiction text resource helps keep our students current in local, national, and world events while at the same time reinforcing the students' reading of the non-fiction genre.

District Strings Concert

The 32nd Annual Wissahickon School District Suzuki Strings concert will be presented on Tuesday, March 27th, 2012 at 7:00 PM at the Wissahickon High School Auditorium. All District string players, grades 3-12, will

be participating in this concert. We are looking forward to this special evening of music!

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

Our PSSA Testing Schedule 2012

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, more commonly known as the PSSA, is administered each spring to third, fourth, and fifth graders throughout Pennsylvania. I am making you aware of these dates now so that you can put these on your family calendar. It is important that your child is in attendance at school on these testing dates.

READING AND MATHEMATICS TESTING

TUE	March 13	Grades 3, 4, and 5
WED	March 14	Grades 3, 4, and 5
THU	March 15	Grades 3, 4, and 5
TUE	March 20	Grades 3, 4, and 5
WED	March 21	Grades 3, 4, and 5
THU	March 22	Grades 3, 4, and 5

WRITING TESTING

TUE	April 17	Grade 5
WED	April 18	Grade 5
THU	April 19	Grade 5

SCIENCE TESTING

MON	April 23	Grade 4
WED	April 25	Grade 5

If you have any questions about the PSSA Schedule for 2012, feel free to contact our counselor, Mrs. Janice Walsh or me.

Dress for Recess

As you know, our students have a 5-10 minute outdoor recess upon arrival at school each morning, and they have a 20-25 minute outdoor recess preceding lunch each day. Recess is an important part of the students' day here at Stony Creek as it provides opportunities for healthy exercise, social interaction, and gameplay.

With the winter weather officially upon us, these recess periods are still an important part of our day, and parents are asked to send students to school wearing the appropriate clothing for this part of the students' day. Warm coats, hats, and gloves/mittens are appropriate. Be sure to put your child's name inside all of these items.

Of course, when winter temperatures are in the low to mid twenties or there is a wind chill that further reduces the temperature outdoors, the students will remain in the building. However, you should always dress your youngster with an outdoor recess in mind. Also, sneakers are the required footwear. Thanks for your support in this area.

Closings/Delays

Where can you find information related to school closings and delays?

Wissahickon Television: Comcast Channel 28
Verizon Channel 41
Snow Closing Hotline: 215-619-8055
KYW1060 AM: Snow #314
WNPV AM: Announced by District Name
District Homepage: www.wsdweb.org

Our Parent Drop-off & Pick-up Line

As you know, each morning and afternoon we have a fair number of parent vehicles that either drop-off or pick-up students. Students should only be dropped off at the top of the circle where staff is on hand to assure your child's safety. Letting your child off at any other place on the line is not permitted. In addition, we ask that drivers DO NOT use cell phones while students are in the process of departing or loading. Student safety is our utmost concern, and every driver must be fully attentive while in our parking lot.

Lost and Found – A Challenge This Coat Belongs To...

As the cooler temperatures have arrived in our area, students are more likely to be wearing heavy sweatshirts, jackets, and coats – even mittens, gloves, headbands, and hats. Unfortunately, each day at Stony Creek students leave behind mittens, gloves, headbands, hats, sweatshirts, and coats, and I find our stage is filled with these “lost” items. The vast majority of these items do not have the child's name and class (e.g. 1G, 1J, 1K, etc.) marked inside with a Sharpie pen. If these items were labeled, we could easily return them to their owners. So, please help us and label these items with your child's NAME & CLASS.

New Immunization Requirements

The Pennsylvania school immunization requirements have been revised. Beginning with the 2011/2012 school year, EVERY student must have two doses of the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or have a documented history of the disease. In addition, all students attending 7th grade must have a Tdap vaccine and a vaccine protecting against meningitis. Your school nurse sent home a flyer regarding these changes last spring. If we do not have a record at school that your child is fully immunized, he or she will be excluded from school as of May 1st. If you have any questions regarding your child's immunization status, please contact the school nurse as soon as possible. (See flier later in this newsletter.)

Emergency Dismissal Plan

What happens when school needs to close early?

In the event that school needs to close early due to inclement weather, *School Messenger*, our district's automated communication system, notifies parents electronically (see article that follows). In the event that school closes early, the school will follow the parent's plan for dismissal. Parents were able to designate one of these options on the form that was sent home in early November:

- *My child will ride his/her assigned bus home.*
- *My child will be picked up by parent/guardian.*
- *My child is a walker and will walk home.*

The YMCA After School Program is not an option as this program is canceled on such early closing days due to inclement weather.

School Messenger

School Messenger is the automated telephone system that our district uses in order to contact families with important announcements and emergency notifications. With this system, parents are able to determine how they are notified: by telephone, cell phone, e-mail, text message, or some combination of them. Parents are also responsible for updating the method of communication. Did your cell phone number change? Log on and make the change yourself. See the “how to” update School Messenger later in this newsletter.

Home and School Communication

There are many ways at Stony Creek to maintain strong home and school communication. Consider the many ways to keep in touch with the happenings at Stony Creek.

- E-Mail
- Telephone
- Note
- Conference
- School Newsletters
- District/School Web Page
- Principal's Blog (on the school's web page)

In addition to these forms of communication, you can also receive some very helpful and important information in these ways.

- e-Notify: (Important information e-mailed to you.)
- School Messenger: (Important information, including emergency school closing and delay information, communicated to you via e-mail, text, phone, etc.)
- This Week at Stony Creek: (Weekly e-mail providing you with information for the upcoming week at Stony Creek.)

Directions for registering for these communication services are listed later in this newsletter.

Resources on Our Web Page

Log on to the Stony Creek web page and look for the newest addition: RESOURCES on the left hand side in the navy blue rectangle. Click on it, and what will you find there:

- Stony Creek Parent Handbook 2011=2012
- Home and School Communication Sources 2011-2012
- WSD Curriculum Overviews by Grade Level

Here is the link:

<http://www.wsdweb.org/page.cfm?p=2203>

**Ssuuna brings his Ugandan
Culture to life for our
students... Thank you, PTO!**



Safety at Stony Creek

As Principal of Stony Creek, it is my responsibility to ensure the safety of our students and staff each and every day at our school. Toward that end, there are standard emergency drills practiced regularly by our students and staff. The following drills will occur throughout the year, and I wanted you to be knowledgeable of them!

Evacuation Drills (Monthly)

Intruder Drills (Seasonally)

Severe Weather Drills (Seasonally)

School Emergency Response Team (Medical

Emergency - Staff Only)

Bus Evacuation Drills (Fall)

These drills are familiar to our students in grades 1-5; however, our kindergarten students will experience these drills for the first time this year. I plan to send a note home with kindergarten students on the day when we conduct the Intruder and Severe Weather Drills for the first time. This way parents can discuss the drill with their children.



Our International Festival Day provides a wide variety of opportunities to learn about the many cultures that make-up Stony Creek! Thank you!

STONY CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

All of us at Stony Creek highly value the communication between our school and the home. In our efforts to communicate information in a timely and efficient manner, we have various approaches to communication. I strongly encourage you to make each approach a part of the school's communication with your home! One of our most important forms of communication is the district website: wsdweb.org. Be sure to visit it for information about our district.

Gary W. Abbamont
Principal

SCHOOL MESSENGER

Emergency Notification System for WSD

School Messenger is the automated telephone system that our district uses in order to contact families with important announcements and emergency notifications. This is the system that sends out calls and text messages for snow closings and absences. The district will send out a

Visit wsdweb.org and click on **FOR PARENTS** button; go to School Messenger Account Help. New parents will receive a letter and activation code to set up an account with WSD.



letter with individualized account information for signing up to SchoolMessenger. If you have lost your letter or your activation code has expired, please go to our district website (<http://www.wsdweb.org/page.cfm?p=1909>) for assistance. Once you are registered in the system you can inform the system as to the best ways to communicate with your family (phone call, text message, e-mail). Once registered, you can go into the system with your password and change how you receive the information from School Messenger. Remember, parents are able to customize the way that they receive these important notifications. Make sure that you are enrolled in School Messenger and that you keep your information updated.

How do I register with School Messenger?

- Enter the following URL into your web browser: <https://contactme.schoolmessenger.com>
- Click the **Sign Up Now** link near the bottom of the page.
- You will be taken to the Sign Up page where you will need to enter a valid e-mail address, a password, your name, and zip code. You'll use your e-mail address and the password you enter here to sign in later. Check **E-Mail Me** when I have a new phone message if you would like to receive an e-mail message each time there is a new message in your mailbox. Click **Create Account** when you are done.
- Next, you should check your e-mail. There will be an Account Activation e-mail from contactme@schoolmessenger.com which contains a link to activate your account. This link will take you to a confirmation page where you must enter your password in order to activate your account. If you don't see the e-mail, check your Junk Mail and spam folders.
- Once you've activated your account, you're ready to add your child(ren) to the account. You should have received an individualized letter for each child. Don't discard the additional letter(s) until you have added them to your account. Click the link on the main page and add your child's student ID and Activation Code.
- When you have finished adding your child(ren) to the account, you will be brought to the **Edit Contact Details** page where you can simply check which types of messages you would like to receive and at which phone number or e-mail address. Make sure that you click **Save** when you are done making changes. If you have other children in the district, you will be able to add them to the same Contact Manager account as soon as you receive their Student ID and Activation Code.

Important Note: *You should only give your work number if it directly dials to your desk. The system is not able to dial an extension if an auto-attendant answers or ask for you if a receptionist answers. Therefore, you should only provide a work number if it is a direct line.*

E-NOTIFY

The new website has a communication tool, eNotify, built into the interface. eNotify allows visitors to the site to receive email communication when news or events are added or changed on the website. eNotify can send out newsletters and other types of information through a central distribution list.

Signing up for eNotify will give you the following:

- Newsletter Subscriptions Delivery Locations (Use multiple emails for one account)

In addition, registered users can receive Site Alerts for:

- News Updates
- Postponements & Cancellations
- Calendar Event Reminders
- Postponements & Cancellations

In order to sign up for eNotify you will need to follow the steps below:

1. Click [Subscribe](#)
2. Fill out the information under New User using the email you want to receive information on. Your email address becomes your username
3. Select the mailing lists you would like to be on. You can change these anytime you want or unsubscribe from all of them by logging back in.
4. The district respects the privacy of the information you submit.

Note: Once you have your account set-up, click the [eNotify](#) link to make changes to your account or check for posted messages.

TheCURRENT

Each month of the school year, September through June, I publish and home and school newsletter entitled, *TheCURRENT*. This publication contains important school-based information related to upcoming events, important announcements, reminders about various school routines, and any other information deemed important to share with our families. *TheCURRENT* is published monthly and will be sent via eNotify if you have registered with that service; it will always be available on the district website on the Stony Creek page under Newsletters. We do not send home *TheCURRENT* in paper form as we are working hard to go *Green*!



THIS WEEK AT STONY CREEK

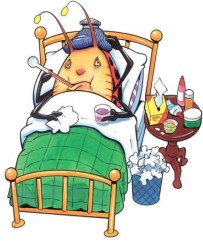
Each weekend (usually on Sundays), Mrs. Suchodolski, a member of the PTO Executive Board, organizes an electronic publication that is sent out via e-mail to those families who register to receive it. It contains school information related to the upcoming week. In this publication you will find important announcements, the week's schedule, a note from the nurse and upcoming event information. Parents find this publication very helpful. You can register to receive this publication at multiple e-mail addresses. We are most appreciative of Mrs. Suchodolski's volunteer efforts to make this publication happen each week at Stony Creek.



E-mail Tracy Suchodolski (parent)
with your e-mail to this address:
such991@comcast.net

For Your Information

In this section of TheCURRENT, I have included some of the important day-to-day reminders about the procedures in place at Stony Creek.



ABSENCE

When your child is going to be absent from school, you are expected to call our school (215.619.8108) and report the absence. Include the name of your child, teacher's name, and reason for absence. This should be done the night before or prior to 8 in the morning. Also, be sure to send in a note when your child returns to school. A note is required if the absence is to be considered an "excused" absence.



BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special days for our students, and we will honor them with a short celebration to mark the day. Parents are expected to be mindful of the district's nutritional policy as well as the dietary/allergy restrictions of students in the classroom. Class birthday recognitions are short (ten minutes) and limited to the classroom community. Teachers will generate a list of healthy snacks that appeal to the class and communicate this list to parents. Parents are asked to drop off the treats in the main office, and these treats will be delivered to the classroom by our staff. Small Gift Items/Goody Bags/Bouquets of Flowers/Balloons are not permitted. For obvious reasons, birthday party invitations are not to be distributed at school.

CHANGE OF DISMISSAL PLAN

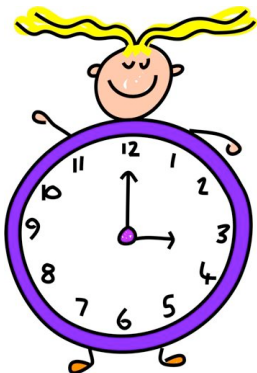
If a parent/guardian wishes to change a student's mode of dismissal (i.e.- walker, bus rider, parent pick up, etc.) it is necessary to write a note to the classroom teacher explaining the change. However, parents/guardians are reminded that students may ride only that bus to which they have been assigned. The teacher will forward the note to the office where it will be kept on file. Requests for students to change buses in order to visit friends after school cannot be honored since most of our school busses are at or near capacity. However, if they will be picked up as car riders or walkers, a note will be needed from both sending and receiving parents.



Any individual, to whom children may be dismissed, must be identified on the *Emergency Information Card*. Please write additional names and phone numbers on the reverse side of the card if necessary. Students will be released only to those individuals whose names are on the emergency card. If for any reason the adult picking up your child is not listed on the emergency card, you must send a dated note to the office of this change. The adult will need to show a form of identification to the staff at the school.

DISMISSAL

We have several dismissal options on a typical school day. The Stony Creek staff supervise all forms of dismissal. Walkers (Our walkers are dismissed from the front doors closest to our kindergarten classrooms.) Parent Pick-up (Parents picking up a child at the end of the day should pull their car into the parking lot closest to the center of the building. Parents wait their turn to move up to the top of the horseshoe driveway and wait for their child to be dismissed by our staff.) Bus (Students will be escorted to their busses by members of our staff.) YMCA (Students attending our After School Program will be dismissed to the program by their teachers.)



EARLY PICK-UP

If you need to pick up your child prior to dismissal time (3:15 PM), you need to come to the main office to do so. Such pickups should take place no later than 2:55 PM. After this time, bus arrivals and student dismissal routines go into effect, and it is too disruptive to make a change.



FAMILY TRAVEL

Our district attendance policy allows for up to 5 days of non-sponsored school travel. As with any absence, you must notify the school in writing of your intention to remove your child from school for this purpose. You will receive an acknowledgement of this request from my office. Remember, however, a total of 10 or more days of absence (including days for non-sponsored school travel) in one school year is considered excessive and cause for concern.

SCHOOL HOURS

Full Day of School

7:45 AM	Early Morning Music Students Drop Off Time
8:20 AM	Drop Off Time for All Students K-5 Begins
8:35 AM	Official Start of School Day
3:15 PM	Official End of School Day



Early Closing Day of School (No Lunch or Recess on Early Closing Days.)

7:45 AM	Early Morning Music Students Drop Off Time
8:20 AM	Drop Off Time for All Students K-5
8:35 AM	Official Start of School Day
11:50 AM	Official End of School Day

LUNCH

Children may purchase a hot lunch. The cost of a lunch is \$2.55. For those who bring their lunches, milk may be purchased for \$.50. Lunch menus are published monthly on the district website and a hard copy will be sent home with your child. Please refer to the Chartwells menu for available lunch and snack options throughout the month. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to see that the child has the money to purchase lunch or to bring a nourishing meal.



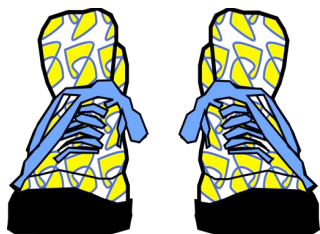
The Wissahickon School District utilizes a Point of Purchase computerized system in the cafeteria. Money for lunches and snacks may be sent to school on a weekly or monthly basis. The money will be entered into the student's cafeteria account. All students will be given a PIN Number to access their accounts at lunchtime. Snacks and lunch funds should be sent to school by check, payable to "WSD Cafeteria Account". Please include your child's name on the check. Parents and guardians are encouraged to use the Point of Purchase system because it greatly increases the efficiency of the lunch lines and reduces the incidence of lost or missing money. Parents are encouraged to make on-line payments at www.mynutrikids.com.

PTO FAMILY DIRECTORY

Directory will provide contact information for our families. This directory was recently published and sent home with students. This is the one resource parents like in order to contact other families for birthday parties, play dates, and the like. Information regarding the PTO Family Directory was sent home at the start of the school year.

SNACKS

Snacks must be simple and healthy according to our district wellness policy. Our teachers will encourage healthy snack choices. Generally, our students eat their snacks while engaged in some productive learning activity. Once again, healthy snacks are strongly encouraged.



SNEAKERS

Our students enjoy an active day at school. Each and every day our students enjoy a short recess at the start of the school day (8:20-8:30 AM) as well as their lunchtime recess (20-25 minutes). Given this level of activity and physical education classes on some days, sneakers are the expected footwear at Stony Creek.



TARDY

If your child arrives late to school, *you must park your car and accompany your child into the main office.* You need to sign your child in with a member of our office staff.

TheCURRENT and THIS WEEK AT STONY CREEK

School newsletters are published on a regular basis to share news and important information about our school community. Stony Creek's *TheCURRENT* is the monthly home and school newsletter, and it is posted on our school website; it is also sent you electronically if you sign up with *School Messenger* (see below) and provide an e-mail address. *This Week at Stony Creek* is an electronic publication e-mailed usually on Sunday evenings providing important information related to the coming week. Contact Tracy Suchodolski at such991@comcast.net in order to be added to the e-mail distribution list.